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Author(s): Stephen Halbrook

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# THE CLASS ORIGINS OF ZIONIST IDEOLOGY

STEPHEN HALBROOK \*

A frequent tendency of contemporary Zionist writing has been to minimize the colonialist and class features of the Zionist movement prior to the creation of the State of Israel. These interrelated features nevertheless emerge clearly in the works of the original Zionist leaders, and are very prominent in the writings of Theodore Herzl, founder of organized Zionism. When, for instance, Herzl requested Cecil Rhodes in 1902 to throw his authority behind the project for Jewish settlement in Palestine, it was in these terms that his letter presented Zionist aspirations to the English colonialist:

You are being invited to help make history. That cannot frighten you, nor will you laugh at it. It is not in your accustomed line; it doesn't involve Africa, but a piece of Asia Minor, not Englishmen but Jews. But had this been on your path, you would have done it by now. How, then, do I happen to turn to you, since this is an out-of-the-way matter for you? How indeed? Because it is something colonial.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to his willingness to identify Zionism with the cause of white settlerdom, a striking theme to be found in Herzl's writing is the orientation of the proposed Jewish state to the requirements of private capital. Among his proposals was one urging the creation of a Jewish company which would "organize trade and commerce in the new country."<sup>2</sup> This company would be funded and controlled by Jewish financial and banking groups, who could expect substantial returns for their endeavours:

The easiest, fastest, and most certain method would be for the great banks to found the Company. The present great financial groups could raise the necessary funds in a short time by merely consulting together... The credit of our great financiers would have to be placed at the service of the National Idea...

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\* Dr. Stephen Halbrook is a member of the Department of Philosophy, College of Arts and Sciences, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama.

<sup>1</sup> T. Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodore Herzl* (New York: Herzl Press and Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), III, pp. 1194. Hereafter cited as *Diaries*.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Lewisohn (ed.), *Theodor Herzl* (Cleveland: World Pub. Co, 1955), p. 252.

The great financiers, moreover, will certainly not be asked to raise an amount so enormous out of pure philanthropic motives; that would be expecting too much. Rather may the promoters and stockholders of the Jewish Company look forward to considerable profit, and they will be able to calculate beforehand what their chances of success are likely to be.<sup>3</sup>

In Herzl's vision, these profits would be astronomical: "One million would produce fifteen millions; and one billion, fifteen billions."<sup>4</sup> "All the immense profits of this speculation in land will go to the Company, for it is entitled to such an unlimited premium, like any entrepreneur, in return for having borne the risk."<sup>5</sup>

It was somewhat symbolic that the original draft of *The Jewish State* was entitled *An Address to the Rothschilds*<sup>6</sup> and intended for the private use of the Rothschild family.<sup>7</sup> For the Zionist programme from its outset aimed at forging an alliance of interests with different sections of the world's political and economic elite. The precise manner in which this elite could expect to gain from the process of Jewish colonization in Palestine can be best perceived through an examination of the thinking that formed the basis of Zionist ideology and exercised a deep influence on the outlook of the movement's leading figures.

#### PRECURSORS OF HERZL

Prior to Herzl, the most important Zionist writer was Moses Hess who founded Zionist ideology in *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862). Originally an adherent of socialist and anarchist views, Hess repudiated most of these<sup>8</sup> and devoted his energies to Jewish nationalism. While official Zionism was later initiated by Theodore Herzl, virtually the whole theoretical programme of both classical and modern Zionism can be found in Hess.

In *Rome and Jerusalem*, Hess develops in great detail the plans he and French imperialist writers were making for the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine, advocating "the founding of Jewish colonies in the land of their

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Hertzberg (ed.) *The Zionist Idea* (NY: Antheneum and the Jewish Pub. Soc. of America, 1969), p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> Lewisohn (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 55; Lotta Levensohn, *Outline of Zionist History* (NY: Scopus Pub. Co., 1941), p. 31

<sup>8</sup> In his so-called radical days Hess had, in fact, previously published a work *The European Triarchy* (1841) which is an argument for an alliance of England, France and Germany to "civilize" the world. See Moses Hess, *Rome And Jerusalem* (NY: Bloch Pub. Co., "The Jewish Book Concern," 1918 and 1945), pp. 20-21.

ancestors, to which enterprise France will undoubtedly lend a hand.”<sup>9</sup> After praising the recent French incursion into Syria, he discusses the Suez Canal and Eurasian railroad projects, which signified that “our lost fatherland [will] be rediscovered on the road to India and China that is now being built in the Orient. Do you still doubt that France will help the Jews to found colonies which may extend from Suez to Jerusalem, and from the banks of the Jordan to the Coast of the Mediterranean?” If so, Hess recommends *The New Eastern Question* (1860) by Ernest Laharanne, who was the private secretary of Napoleon III during the period of growing French imperialism in Syria.<sup>10</sup>

This agent of Napoleon advocated support of Jewish colonization of Palestine by “the efforts of international Jewish bankers” or by a general subscription paid by all Jews.<sup>11</sup> He went on to clarify the interests European imperialism as a whole had in the seizure of Palestine:

What European power today would oppose the plan that the Jews, united through a Congress, should buy back their ancient fatherland? Who would object if the Jews flung to the decrepit old Turkey a few handfuls of gold, and said to her: “Give me back my home and use this money to consolidate the other parts of your tottering empire?”

No objections would be raised to the realization of such a plan, and Judea would be permitted to extend its boundaries from Suez to the harbour of Smyrna, including the entire area of the western Lebanon range.... European industry has daily to search for new markets as an outlet for its products. We have no time to lose. The time has arrived when it is imperative to call the ancient nations back to life, so as to open new highways and byways for European civilization.<sup>12</sup>

Hess wholly endorses Laharanne’s reasoning, and extends the analysis further in a note. After extolling French conquests in Egypt, Syria, and other areas in the East, Hess writes:

After the work on the Suez Canal is completed the interests of world commerce will undoubtedly demand the establishment of depots and settlements along the road to India and China, settlements of such a character as will transform the neglected and anarchic state of the countries lying along this road into legal and cultivated States. This can occur only under the military protection of the European powers. Sagacious French diplomacy has always planned to annex the Orient to the precincts of culture. Undoubtedly, envy, which has caused the French to oppose the liberation of Italy, will also affect the French Oriental policy with desires for conquest and domination.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30. Hess expressed his general imperialist sympathies with comments like: “But the soldiers of civilization, the French, are gradually sweeping away the dominance of the barbarians” on French imperial policies. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Hertzberg (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 621-52.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Hess, p. 133.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-6.

But this was not objectionable, Hess concludes the note, because the Ideal must be based on material interests, and anyone who argues to the contrary is a hypocrite.<sup>13</sup>

In the text Hess continues, addressing himself to Jews:

A great calling is reserved for you: to be a living channel of communication between three continents. You should be the bearers of civilization to the primitive people of Asia.... You should be the mediators between Europe and far Asia, open the roads that lead to India and China — those unknown regions which must ultimately be thrown open to civilization.<sup>14</sup>

“Civilization,” in fact, was a euphemism for European domination by force. The inhabitants of the regions concerned, those “wild Arabian hordes and the African peoples” living in a land which “no one should inherit but the Jews” would not be consulted beforehand, and the settlers would need to be imposed upon them: “a police system must be established by this [Colonizing] Society, to protect the colonists from the attacks of the Bedouins...”<sup>15</sup>

Hess wrote at a time when it appeared that France would actually settle Jews in Palestine.<sup>16</sup> Why the Jews? “It is to the interest of France to see that the road leading to India and China should be settled by a people which will be loyal to the cause of France to the end... But is there any other nation more adapted to carry out this mission than Israel...?”<sup>17</sup> Apart from Jewish religious links with Palestine, and mutual cultural and racial affinities, economic benefits would accrue to both parties in the imperialist-colonialist alliance. “For Jewish colonization on the road to India and China, there is no lack, either of Jewish labourers or of Jewish talent and capital. Let only the germ be planted under the protection of the European powers,” — i.e., others as well as France, for Hess noted proposals similar to Laharanne’s by U.S., German, and English writers<sup>18</sup> — “and the tree of a new life will spring forth by itself and bear excellent fruit.”<sup>19</sup> “If the Jews, with the help of France, should originate a mass migration of their oppressed brethren into the Orient, it will take place only because the Jewish colonists will find a better field for gaining a livelihood, and Jewish labour receive at least as much legal protection as it enjoys in the Occident.”<sup>20</sup> Hess agreed that

<sup>13</sup> Hess, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>16</sup> Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1961), p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Hess, p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132 and 142.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

the first step would be a company for Jewish colonization to which settlers would pay ground rent and perhaps loan interest.<sup>21</sup>

A class analysis of the ideology propagated by Hess would reveal three basic interests to gain. One would be the upper bourgeoisie of the European imperialist states, whose commercial interests would benefit from a Jewish state in the Orient. Another was the Jewish workers who, taking advantage of and aiding in the conquest of Palestine, would constitute a workers' aristocracy and receive short run privileges. A third was the Jewish bourgeoisie, who would gain not only in a general way from the emigration to Palestine of the troublesome East European Jews who bred real or pretended anti-Semitism and most of whom Hess promised would emigrate,<sup>22</sup> but also in particular by having their investments made safe in part by the programme Hess advocated. For although Hess praised the working man, and sometimes made mystical references to socialist principles, he attacked socialist revolutionaries and defended the idea of class collaboration. "A common, native soil is a primary condition, if there is to be introduced among the Jews better and more progressive relations between Capital and Labour."<sup>23</sup> In other words, he recognized the reality of class struggle among Jews and desired to palliate it. "On the common ground of Jewish patriotism, all Jewish classes will meet, orthodox and progressive, rich and poor." Hess "heartily subscribed in all detail" to the conclusions reached by a Jewish counterpart to Laharanne, one of which was that the Palestine colonization movement would be run by "a number of men who possess great influence or rule, by virtue of their wealth, men like Montefiore, Albert Cohn, Rothschild, Fould, and others... A large number of the rich and respected Jews of all parts of the world will undoubtedly join them."<sup>24</sup>

Hess was to Marx as Weizmann later was to Trotsky: all were Jewish but the Zionists and socialists attacked each other on the question of class versus racial struggle. Hess reversed the Marxist view that racism was a cover for class interests and advocated a view of history in which "the race struggle is the primal one, and the class struggle secondary."<sup>25</sup> Attacking monogenism, he claimed that the races are primal and essentially different and that racial characteristics are genetic and free of environmental influence.<sup>26</sup> He mystically referred to "racial instinct" and "the pure German race," argued for the

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>22</sup> Eg., *Ibid.*, p. 133, n. 9. The desire to divert East European Jews to Palestine was to assume especially large proportions as a motive for Western middle class Zionism towards the end of the nineteenth century with the great Jewish migrations from the Russian Empire.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 153-4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 162 ff.

“Jewish cult,” and saw a natural antagonism between German and Jew.<sup>27</sup> (Apart from diverting attention away from the clash of class interests, this kind of thinking only added coal to the fire of Gobineau, Richard Wagner, and Georg von Schoenerer.)

Hess was not the only precursor of later Zionism. There was Rabbi Yehudah Alkalai, who as early as 1834 proposed Jewish colonization of Palestine and who later urged that the Jews “conquer the Holy Land by the might of their sword.” “Much of his pleading was addressed to the Jewish notables of the Western world, men like the English financier Moses Montefiore and the French politician Adolph Crémieux...”<sup>28</sup> Similar elitism was shown by the rich Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, whose first expression of Zionism consisted of a letter in 1836 to the head of the Berlin branch of the Rothschild family. As a representative of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie, he saw that the Eastern Jews were “taken care of” by persuading a group to buy land for colonization near Jaffa in 1866 and by inducing the Alliance Israelite Universelle to found an agricultural school there in 1870.<sup>29</sup> “Alkalai, Kalischer, and Hess are an overture to the history of Zionism,” but in this century “Hess, in particular, is ever more greatly admired.”<sup>30</sup> Excepting Herzl, Hess is perhaps the most important Zionist ideologist. (This ignores *cultural* Zionism — as indeed this whole paper does — where such figures as Asher Ginzberg and the poets Bialik and Tchernichovsky stand out; but *political* Zionism was created by Hess and Herzl.)

## HERZL

The most important figure in the study of classical Zionism is Theodore Herzl, the greatest Zionist ideologist and the founder of the organized world Zionist movement. Herzl, the son of a rich banker-broker, became a Zionist in 1894. Believing that Zionism was in the best interests of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie, he attempted to woo Baron Maurice de Hirsch and, after being unsuccessful, put his hopes in the Rothschilds, to whom he addressed the first version of *The Jewish State*. Herzl felt that these great leaders of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie were the logical ones to turn to, in part because they were already supporting colonization of Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe in Palestine and Argentina. The class struggles and class alliances of which Zionism is the reflection are revealed most comprehensively in *The Jewish State*. In fact, the work lends itself so well to class analysis because Herzl’s methods consisted in openly spelling out how his plans would react on each

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 50, 127, and 111.

<sup>28</sup> Hertzberg, p. 104.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

class involved. The following are the class interests to which Herzl promised vast gains:

First, the economic interests of the European upper bourgeoisie, which were integral to the imperialist policies practised by the European powers. In what is perhaps the most revealing passage of the book, Herzl writes: "If His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake the complete management of the finances of Turkey. We should there form a part of a wall of defence for Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism. We should as a neutral state remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence."<sup>31</sup> Explicit here is a triple power alliance: a deal with the Turkish imperialists which would "give us" Palestine (what the indigenous inhabitants thought was unimportant) in exchange for Jewish bourgeois management of Turkish tax exploitation; the new state would serve as a base for the European imperial powers against the "barbaric" Asians, in return for which these powers would prop up the Zionist colonizers. This explains why Herzl wanted the Jewish question "to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council" and why "the movement will not only be inaugurated in absolute accordance with the law, but it can nowise be carried out without the friendly co-operation of the interested governments, who will derive substantial benefits."<sup>32</sup> Herzl specifically promised the European upper bourgeoisie a huge new market: "The states would have a further benefit in the enormous increase of their export trade; for since the emigrant Jews 'over there' would for a long time to come be dependent on European products, they would necessarily have to import them."<sup>33</sup>

Second, the specifically Jewish upper bourgeoisie, led by the Rothschilds. A Zionist colony would benefit them in two ways. One was that it would act as a home for the Eastern Jewish emigrants who allegedly provoked anti-Semitism, thereby preventing the Jewish bourgeoisie from fully assimilating, i.e., from taking their place as inconspicuous members of the European ruling classes. Besides decreasing anti-Semitism on the part of those the emigrants competed with in the economy, the solution of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie to the problem, namely colonization, would also do a service to the non-Jewish bourgeoisie because it meant divesting Europe of a fertile source of revolutionaries. Early in the work Herzl complains that the poor Jews "become a revolutionary proletariat, the corporals of every revolutionary party," and that "we continue to produce an abundance of mediocre intellectuals who find no outlet, and this endangers our social position as much as does our increasing

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<sup>31</sup> Lewisohn, pp. 254-5.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 238 and 244.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.



wealth. Educated Jews without means are now rapidly becoming socialists.”<sup>34</sup> Thus the desperate and the intellectuals would be the first to go to Palestine.<sup>35</sup> Referring to the admitted exploitation of miserable workmen by big capitalists, Herzl reveals his intentions: “My desire is not to agitate, but to reconcile differences.”<sup>36</sup> Herzl did not believe these interests had been reconciled because colonization had not been extensive enough. His object was to colonize on a larger scale, and to transplant the people on this scale a powerful idea was necessary: “The State Idea surely has that power.”<sup>37</sup> If the representatives of big Jewish finance capital like de Hirsch and Rothschild initially felt uncomfortable with such a fantastic idea, it was because they were not as sure of its realization as the dreamer Herzl. But in retrospect it was Herzl who had the most foresight.

However, it was not only for this reason that he scorned “the fear that if the present plan is realized, it could in any way damage property and interests now held by Jews,” and that he wrote in reference to the rich Jews that it “would, rather, be distinctly to their advantage.”<sup>38</sup> For over and over he reiterates the huge fortunes to be gained by Jewish big finance capital. First there would be the Jewish Company, patterned after the classic imperialist model. “The Jewish Company is conceived partly on the model of the great land-development companies. It might be called a Jewish Chartered Company. The Jewish Company will be set up as a joint-stock company, incorporated in England, under British laws and protection.”<sup>39</sup> The company would be controlled by the leading Jewish financiers who would be rewarded, Herzl promised, with huge returns on investments.<sup>40</sup> Nothing would escape the domination of this financial elite. “The Jewish Company will be the liquidating agent for the business interests of departing Jews, and will organize trade and commerce in the new country.”<sup>41</sup> This domination would be guaranteed by finance capital’s political control; Herzl argues for “a tight, centralized administration” — “I incline to an aristocratic republic” — in short: “Politics must work from the top down.”<sup>42</sup>

A third class Herzl speaks of is composed of the capitalists who would emigrate to Palestine, which included some upper bourgeois (excluding finance capital) and many middle bourgeois. Besides some of the above benefits which

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 250 and 247.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 242-3.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 241-2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 292-4.

would be applicable here, Herzl names others. He argues for a great new entrepreneurial enterprise for these classes, which were either being forced into bankruptcy by the rise of monopoly capitalism or were simply searching for bold new business ventures. "Rich Jews... will be able to enjoy their possessions in peace, 'over there.' If they co-operate in carrying out this emigration scheme, their capital will be rehabilitated and will have served to promote an unexampled undertaking." Herzl goes into great detail to prove that the profits of emigrants will surely rise. "When we bring labour to the new country, we simultaneously create trade.... Jewish entrepreneurs will soon realize the business prospects that the new country offers."<sup>43</sup> The colony would offer long term investments and an exclusive national market.

The establishment of industries will be promoted by a judicious system of duties, by the supply of cheap raw material, and by the creation of a bureau to collect and publish industrial statistics....Industrialists will be able to apply to centralized labour agencies...Parties of workmen will thus be systematically drafted from place to place like a body of troops.<sup>44</sup>

The workmen referred to would consist not only of unskilled but also skilled labour and even those who were formerly petty bourgeois, a class Herzl hoped would be forced to give up their trades in the face of Zionist monopolies and join the proletariat.<sup>45</sup> Herzl was an ideologist of the middle and especially the upper bourgeoisies; he expressed the interests of the petty bourgeois little more than he did the proletariat. The chronological order of emigration he expected was in inverse order to the gain each respective class would obtain: "those who are now desperate will go first ["Only desperate men make good conquerors"<sup>46</sup>], after them the poor, next the well-to-do, and last of all the wealthy."<sup>47</sup> Each class would exploit, and reap the gains from, the class that preceded it. Massive resources of unskilled labour "will come at first from the great reservoirs of Russia and Romania"; they would be disciplined to the tune of not permitting them to own for a period of years the houses they built, of being paid in kind and not money, etc.; "the organization of all this will be military in character, with ranks, promotions, and pensions."<sup>48</sup>

The poorest will go first and cultivate the soil. They will construct roads, bridges, railways, and telegraph installations, regulate rivers, and provide themselves with homesteads, all according to predetermined plans. Their labour will create trade, trade will create markets, and markets will attract new settlers—for every man will go voluntarily, at his own expense

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 264-8.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 260-1, and 264 and 282.

and his own risk. The labour invested in the soil will enhance its value. The Jews will soon perceive that a new and permanent frontier has been opened up for that spirit of enterprise which has heretofore brought them only hatred and obloquy.<sup>49</sup>

The nationalist and racial superstructure in *The Jewish State* certainly does not obscure its class base. Nationalism and racial ideology were not simply added to give the argument an air of bourgeois respectability, but served very definite economic functions in themselves. Herzl's insistence on the Jews being "*Ein Volk*" ("One People") served to obscure the Jewish bourgeois exploitation of the Jewish working classes as well as provided fuel for the anti-Semites who hoped to divert the working classes in general from class struggle to racial struggle.<sup>50</sup>

Herzl of course identified with Hess on the question of imperialism among others. As he wrote in 1899: "Who knows whether I would have dared to issue my book if the significant works of the German Hess and the Russian Pinsker had been known to me?"<sup>51</sup> While Herzl did not stress the imperialist nature of Zionism at length in *The Jewish State* because it was so obvious, the history of the rest of his life is the history of Zionism dealing with one imperialist power after another. Before his early death, Herzl had personally dealt with the Grand Duke of Baden, the Grand Vizier of Turkey, Ferdinand of Bulgaria, the Kaiser Wilhelm, the Sultan Abdul Hamid, Joseph Chamberlain and other English diplomats, the Russian ministers Witte and von Plehve, Oscar Straus, the American ambassador to Turkey, the King of Italy, and Pope Pius X.<sup>52</sup>

Zionism grew out of the historical age of European colonialism and imperialism, and it was in this context that Herzl thought and acted. In the early years he dealt extensively with the Turkish imperialists, and amplified his proposal in *The Jewish State* that the Zionists would help in a financial way to prevent the tottering Turkish empire from collapsing in return for Palestine. Herzl proposed that Jewish bankers fund the state debts of the Sultan, and attempted to interest Rothschild and others in the idea. At the first Zionist

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 252-3.

<sup>50</sup> It was significant that Herzl's classic converted Adolph Eichmann "promptly and forever to Zionism." For this and the manner in which the Zionists and Jewish big bourgeoisie collaborated with Eichmann against the Jewish masses, see Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (NY: Viking Press, 1963), pp. 36-7 and generally.

<sup>51</sup> "Zionism," in Lewisohn, pp. 324-5. Leo Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation* (1882) is not nearly as important as the work of Hess and Herzl. His solution was the same: to rid the world of the troublesome Eastern Jews, Palestine was to be colonized; leadership would be in the hands of the Jewish big bourgeoisie ("our greatest and best forces—men of finance, of science, and of affairs, statesmen and publicists"), who would go through the proper czarist channels and obtain the support of the Western governments to form the colony. Hertzberg, pp. 196-7. His racism is particularly blatant in speaking of the "Chosen People"; "unlike the Negroes, they belong to an advanced race ..." *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>52</sup> Lewisohn, p. 70.

Congress in 1897 he said: "The financial help which the Jews can give to Turkey is by no means inconsiderable and would serve to obviate many an internal ill from which the country is now suffering."<sup>53</sup> One of these ills was to be the growing discontent of the Arabs, who wished to be free of the Sultan. "Yet the Turkish Empire was to be interested in Jewish settlements on this premise: with the Jews a new and completely loyal factor would be introduced into the Near East; and a new loyal element would certainly help to keep down the greatest of the menaces that threatened the Imperial Government from all sides, the menace of an Arab uprising. Therefore when Herzl, during these negotiations, received cables from students of various oppressed nationalities protesting against agreements with a government which had just slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Armenians, he only observed: 'This will be useful for me with the Sultan.'<sup>54</sup> Herzl's collaborator, the wealthy businessman Max Nordau, continued these same policies after Herzl's death in 1904; thus, at the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905, he made "a direct offer to turn the Zionist settlement into a bastion for the Turkish government, against the inhabitants of the country." In Nordau's own words, the Zionist colonists in Palestine and Syria "will resist any attack on the authority of the Sultan and defend this authority with all its might."<sup>55</sup>

Herzl also attempted to interest German imperialism in Zionist colonies. As early as 1895 he began wooing the empire builder Bismarck, whose advice and aid Herzl craved. "Bismarck is now the touchstone and cornerstone of the plan," he wrote.<sup>56</sup> His intermediary with the German state was the Kaiser's uncle, the Grand Duke of Baden, a fervent advocate of Zionism. To him Herzl expounded the white man's burden and argued that the Zionists would colonize Palestine "as representatives of Western civilization."<sup>57</sup> "It is clear that the settlement of a neutral people on the shortest road to the East can be of immense importance for the German Orient policy. And what people is meant by that? That people which...is compelled nearly everywhere to join the revolutionary parties."<sup>58</sup> In other words, the German state had a dual interest in Zionism: to prevent revolution and create loyal colonizers.

Perhaps the most revealing activities of Herzl were his dealings with British imperialism. To the Fourth Zionist Congress in 1900 he declared: "England, mighty England, free England, with its world-embracing outlook

<sup>53</sup> Hertzberg, p. 229.

<sup>54</sup> Hannah Arendt, "Zionism Reconsidered" in Michael Selzer (ed.), *Zionism Reconsidered* (NY: Macmillan, 1970), p. 236.

<sup>55</sup> Avnery, p. 51.

<sup>56</sup> *Diaries*, I, p. 126. See also I, 115-20 and II, 438.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Peter Buch, *Burning Issues of the Mideast Crisis* (NY: Merit Pub., n.d.), p. 9.

[and world-embracing military power and economic interests!], will understand us and our aspirations. With England as a starting point we may be sure that the Zionist idea will soar further and higher than ever before.”<sup>59</sup> Within a few months, he was concentrating tremendous efforts on gaining British imperialism as an ally. In 1902 he records in his diary: “The figures in my chess game now are Cecil Rhodes (with whom I am to meet after his return from Scotland); Roosevelt, the new President (through Gotthiel); the King of England (through the Bishop of Ripon); the Czar (through General von Hess); etc.”<sup>60</sup> Herzl made several attempts to meet with Cecil Rhodes, the conqueror of large parts of Africa,<sup>61</sup> who advocated war as a method for keeping the working class in the motherland from revolting. Herzl begged Rhodes to give Zionism the weight of his authority as well as to invest in it, for which he would “have the satisfaction of making a good profit.”<sup>62</sup> This, however, turned out to be just another abortive hope, for Rhodes died before anything could be accomplished.

But Rhodes did leave the legacy of his strategy of conquest for Herzl, who accordingly began advocating the colonization by Jews of existing British colonial areas to act as stepping stones to Palestine itself, which the Sultan had refused to give him: “We would rally on Cyprus and one day go over to Eretz Israel and take it by force.”<sup>63</sup> Before long he added al-Arish and the Sinai Peninsula to the list. October 22, 1902 found Herzl planning with Joseph Chamberlain, the colonial secretary whose name is legendary in British imperialism. Herzl recorded the conversation:

Then I came to speak about the territory which I wanted from England: Cyprus, al-Arish, and the Sinai Peninsula.... He was prepared to help if he could; he liked the Zionist idea; etc. In fact, if I could show him a spot in the English possessions where there were no white people as yet, we could talk about that.

The present inhabitants of these three countries would be made to leave, and then the Zionists could prepare for the attack. “Only now did he understand me completely, my desire to obtain a rallying point for the Jewish people in the vicinity of Palestine.” England would give the Zionists the lands. “In return she would reap an increase in power and the gratitude of ten million Jews.”<sup>64</sup> Chamberlain was enthusiastic, and the two, as Herzl writes, secretly

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<sup>59</sup> Lewisohn, p. 330.

<sup>60</sup> *Diaries*, III, p. 1179.

<sup>61</sup> See above, p. 86 for some of Herzl’s correspondence to Rhodes.

<sup>62</sup> *Diaries*, III, pp. 1193-4.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1023.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 1360-3.

agreed to conceal the fact that Herzl was planning a Jameson raid of Rhodes' fame to conquer Palestine.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout these and other talks, Herzl reiterates the identity of interests between imperialism and Zionism, arguing that British support of his plans would ensure pro-British fifth columnists as well as markets. "In some short years the Empire would be richer by a rich colony," and, he adds, in reference to the Jews: "at one stroke England will get ten million secret subjects," "ten million agents for her greatness and her influence," who would also cater to the English market.<sup>66</sup> After it was found impractical to colonize al-Arish and Sinai on a large scale, Chamberlain suggested a colony in Uganda, which he apparently hoped would supply English commerce and industry with sugar and cotton.<sup>67</sup> Even more important would be its role as a base of British power in rebellious East Africa. Not only had there been trouble there since the protectorate began in 1894, which was intensified by the revolt led by Mwanga in 1897, but the people were restless in the adjacent areas: insurrection began in the Sudan also in 1897; the Kikuyu peasants of Kenya, the forerunners of Mau Mau, repeatedly rebelled; and there was some turmoil as well as German competition in Tanzania, Rwanda and the Congo. The conquest of East Africa was not complete until 1906, and only then was security gained for such items as the investments of the Imperial British East Africa Company, British control of the lower sources of the Nile, the corridor to the fertile country around Lake Victoria, the railroad line, and forced labour. In sum, the British were interested in the possibility of white Jews settling in Uganda for the same reason as they helped white South Africans to settle there; and that is the same reason why they hoped the Zionists would at a future time settle in Palestine. And it was at Herzl's prodding that Chamberlain could see the role of Zionism in this light.<sup>68</sup> While British colonialists had argued in the nineteenth century for white Jewish colonization in strategic military and economic areas populated by non-whites, it was now Herzl who carried the torch. One indicator of this out of many was the letter he wrote to Lord Rothschild of England: "you may claim high credit from your government if you strengthen English influence east of the Mediterranean by a great colonization of our people at a middle point of Egyptian and Indo-Persian interests."<sup>69</sup>

Of course, Herzl could not give up the dream of Palestine even if granted Uganda, for the onus of development was to be borne by the Eastern Jewish

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1368-9.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1366-7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1473.

<sup>68</sup> Thus, Herzl's promise that a conquered Palestine would be in the British sphere of influence. *Ibid.*, p. 1474.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1309.

poor, who, it was believed, could be mobilized only on a religious basis and could be used only if the Zionist plans were associated with the so-called Holy Land. But Uganda, as well as other countries, could be colonized and employed as rallying points for the final objective, the conquest of Palestine. Herzl revealed these ambitions in a letter to Nordau in 1903:

Let us seize the opportunity offered us to become a miniature England. Let us begin by acquiring our own colonies. On the strength of our colonies we shall conquer our homeland. Let the territory situated between Kilimanjaro and Kenya become the first colony of Israel.... we will establish new 'reserves of power' in Mozambique, Congo, and Tripolitania with the help of the Portuguese, Belgians, and Italians.<sup>70</sup>

The leaders of Zionism had no orientation towards the masses, and based themselves on diplomacy, i.e., elitist decisions made by big powers. In Herzl's attitudes this elitist tendency, and the contempt for the masses which it reflected, expressed itself in regard to the very solution of the "Jewish problem," which Herzl believed should be resolved through an aristocratic Jewish state. This explains why he deplored mass action on the part of the oppressed Jews of the East—i.e., popular revolution—and, working hand in hand with the Russian government, advocated the Zionist solution of emigration to prevent revolution. The Eastern Jews were notorious revolutionaries, and one of the ultimate reasons Herzl had in creating and organizing Zionism was to channel such tendencies.

Herzl's resort to colonization to divert the Jewish proletariat and intellectuals from insurrection had already been expressed in *The Jewish State*. In an article written in 1897 he reiterated this by pointing out that "the Jews will serve as volatile revolutionary material just as long as the Jewish Question is not solved along lines suggested by us."<sup>71</sup> Both Herzl and Nordau repeated this same idea a few weeks later at the First Zionist Congress as well as succeeding congresses.<sup>72</sup> The clearest revelation of Zionism as a counter-revolutionary, Jewish as well as non-Jewish bourgeois ideology, came with Herzl's dealings with the anti-Semitic czarist ministers Witte and von Plehve, who organized the Kishinev pogroms in 1902. It was with the proposal of turning the exploited Jews from revolution that Herzl went to see von Plehve in 1903.<sup>73</sup> Witte and von Plehve also wanted the Jews to emigrate to prevent revolution, and Herzl made a secret agreement to use Zionism to co-opt Jewish revolutionaries in return for czarist support of Zionist colonization in Palestine. Von Plehve wanted to

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<sup>70</sup> A. Chouraqui, *Theodore Herzl*, ed. du Seuil, Paris, 1960, pp. 310-1; as quoted in Lobel, "Palestine and the Jews," in Ahmad El Kodszy and Eli Lobel *The Arab World and Israel* (NY: Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 116.

<sup>71</sup> Joseph Adler, *The Herzl Paradox* (NY: Hadrian Press and Herzl Press, 1962), p. 33.

<sup>72</sup> Thus Hertzberg, p. 240 and Lewisohn, p. 319.

<sup>73</sup> Hertzberg, pp. 48-9.

get rid of all Jews but the bourgeois ones;<sup>74</sup> his part of the deal was to sanction mass migration, to pressure the Sultan, and to aid in the establishment of a Russian branch of the Jewish Colonial Trust Company.<sup>75</sup> The czarist government agreed to support Zionism “provided it retains the quiet and lawful character which has hitherto distinguished it.”<sup>76</sup> A few days after his visit Herzl wrote to von Plehve that “if a settlement of the Jewish people took place in Palestine, the radical elements would be forced to take part in the movement... The frustration of these hopes would upset the whole situation... the revolutionary parties would gain everything that Zionism, represented by my friends and me, lost.”<sup>77</sup> In short, a central element of Zionist ideology was counter-revolution, and one of its concerns was to protect the power of the Jewish and non-Jewish upper and middle bourgeoisies all over the world and particularly in Russia.

This certainly holds in bold relief Hertzberg’s admission in reference to the conflict between the Jewish bourgeoisie (allied with the religious scholars) and the masses: “this too little studied class war is a root cause of much of modern Jewish history and the tensions that resulted from it have not yet vanished.”<sup>78</sup> This conflict became increasingly intensified after the birth of a Jewish proletariat in the East in the beginning of the nineteenth century. After the first three quarters of that century this class became more and more destitute, and its ranks were joined by the Jewish petty bourgeoisie, which could not endure the competition to which its small artisan type industries which produced consumers’ goods were subjected. Because of such economic factors as well as the facts that the Jews had to endure oppression as a special minority, that there was a large Jewish intelligentsia, and that Jews were highly urbanized, there was a larger proportion of Jews than non-Jews in the revolutionary parties. Rather than believe the Zionist myth that gentiles have anti-Semitic genes, these revolutionaries knew that the czarist government was the main instigator of anti-Semitism and were sure that the masses would have no incentive to fall for anti-Semitism once they had all together seized the means of production from the landlords and big capitalists, thereby eliminating the economic competition which divided Jews from non-Jews. This pointed to one objective: the revolutionary overthrow of the czar. It was in the class interest of the Jewish and non-Jewish workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, and intellectuals to rise up together and crush their oppressors.

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<sup>74</sup> *Diaries*, IV, p. 1535.

<sup>75</sup> Lewisohn, p. 81.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>77</sup> Lobel, p. 115.

<sup>78</sup> Hertzberg, p. 59.



Particularly after 1881 Jews began large scale migration westward, which alarmed the Jewish bourgeoisie there. "The well-known, and soon notorious, participation of Jews in preparing for a revolution in Russia was, if anything, even more frightening to the western Jewish bourgeoisie"<sup>79</sup> — not only because of the anti-Semitism it supposedly prompted but also because they would stand to lose by a popular revolution in Russia. It has been seen that Herzl consciously used Zionism to serve the interests of the Jewish bourgeoisie in this connection. Zionism developed out of many factors in the concrete conditions of the nineteenth century, factors which included not only the colonialist imperative but also the perhaps less obvious interest on the part of the ruling classes to nip revolution in the bud. Zionism performed this function well in some cases; for instance, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, originally an adherent of the Narodniks and the bombthrowing Nihilists, was converted by Zionist rhetoric, and eventually ended up in Palestine.<sup>80</sup> A similar process happened with Moshe Leib Lilienblum, who exchanged belief in class struggle for a role as one of Herzl's most active supporters in Russia.<sup>81</sup> Another example was Joseph Hayyim Brenner. Nevertheless, the Jewish masses were not converted by Zionism, and only a very few believed in the words of men like Leo Pinsker. An insignificant number went to Palestine, and they were saved from collapse only by Rothschild's efforts.<sup>82</sup>

Zionism, then, did not spring from the Jewish masses: initially sponsored mainly by non-Jewish agents of imperialism,<sup>83</sup> it was developed by representatives of the bourgeoisie such as Herzl. It was an ideology imported from the West, where Jews tended to be merchants or bankers, into the East, where the great majority of Jews were manual workers. Far from arising from the depths of the people, Zionism was an ideological tool of the Western bourgeois Jews in their dealings with the East, and it is no accident that "the great majority of Eastern European Jews were, up to the outbreak of the second World War, opposed to Zionism.... The most fanatical enemies of Zionism were precisely the workers, those who spoke Yiddish, those who considered themselves Jews; they were the most determined opponents of the idea of an emigration from Eastern Europe to Palestine... Among the Jews of Eastern Europe the feeling that only the overthrow of Tsardom by way of revolution could relieve the

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159-60.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167-8; see also 172-4.

<sup>82</sup> Hans Kohn, "Zion and the Jewish National Idea," in Selzer, p. 182.

<sup>83</sup> Apart from men like Laharanne quoted earlier, early pre-Zionist proponents of Jewish colonization in Palestine included Lord Palmerston and Lord Shaftesbury in 1840, and many British enthusiasts, such as Sir Laurence Oliphant. See, e.g., Levensohn, p. 62; Uri Avnery, *Israel Without Zionists* (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 56-57; Alan Taylor, "Zionism and Jewish History," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, I, 2 (Winter 1972), pp. 38-39.

discrimination and oppression to which they were subjected, became almost universal; and Jews played a very prominent part in the revolutionary movement."<sup>84</sup> Thus there were Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg, Kamenev and Zinoviev, Martov and Dan, and many less well known socialists, anarchists, and populists of various types. The Jewish working classes were not converted to Zionism; they recognized where their long run interests lay. They supported the Bolsheviks, the S.R.s, or at least the Bund, all of which saw Zionism as a bourgeois ideology: few indeed lent their sanction to a movement that worked with the czar and his pogrom-instigators to prevent revolution.<sup>85</sup>

The Eastern Jews who migrated to the West also opposed Zionism and many chose the revolutionary path in the conviction that both anti-Semitism and Zionism diverted petty bourgeois and worker anti-capitalist consciousness away from revolution. A detailed history of the revolutionary activities of the Jewish emigrants in London who worked in sweatshops or were unemployed is given in the autobiography of Rudolph Rocker, who was the dominating figure among the masses of these workers in the years 1893-1917.<sup>86</sup> Rocker discusses the activities of Aaron Lieberman, who in the early seventies became the first to organize Jewish workers in both Russia and England. In a manifesto in Hebrew he wrote: "Human brotherhood knows no division according to nations and races; it knows only useful workers and harmful exploiters." To the Jewish upper bourgeoisie he implored: "It is your fault that we have been exposed to calumny. International speculators, who have dragged our name through the mud, you do not belong to us!" He agitated for class war against them as well as against the rabbis who defended them by preaching submission.<sup>87</sup> He laid the rudiments for the work of Rocker, under whose guidance a large Jewish trade union movement was organized in the East End. Every one of the unions was organized by the ceaseless initiative of the Jewish anarchists.<sup>88</sup> "The mass meetings of the Federation of Jewish Anarchists in the Great Assembly Hall in Mile End and in the wonderland in Whitechapel were attended by thousands of people, five, six, seven thousand."<sup>89</sup>

The Western Jewish bourgeoisie viewed such developments with horror, and their spokesmen in the synagogues and the press constantly denounced these rebellious class enemies. It was no wonder that Herzl declared at the

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<sup>84</sup> Issac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 61 and 66-7.

<sup>85</sup> On the extreme hostility between the Bund and the Zionists, see Richard J.H. Gottheil, *Zionism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1914), pp. 172-6.

<sup>86</sup> See particularly the epilogue by Sam Dreen, who was one of these emigrants, in Rocker, *The London Years* (London: Robert Anscombe and Co., 1956), p. 359.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113-9.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53. In the US the Jewish anarchist Emma Goldman was having comparable successes agitating the Jewish emigrants.

Fourth Zionist Congress in 1900 that “our brethren here would fear for their privileged economic condition if this country were to become a refuge for our desperate Jews.”<sup>90</sup> Zionism was born in the midst of this class war between the Jewish bourgeoisie and proletariat and “the Zionists had no following of any consequence at that time in the Jewish working class movement.”<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, the anti-Zionist tradition among the whole Jewish proletariat in the West continued for many years.<sup>92</sup>

So-called Labour Zionism, founded by Syrkin, Aaron David Gordon, and especially Ber Borochov, never posed a real third choice in the place of revolution or (bourgeois) Zionism. It accepted all the racial elements of Zionism proper, and can only be considered as a special ideology within the Zionist context to meet the particular interests of the members of the middle and petty bourgeoisies and the labour aristocracy who personally carry out the work of colonization. A self-avowed Marxist, Borochov strongly attacked Lenin, anarchism, and even the Bund. Herzl was the “unrecognized ancestor” of the Marxist school of Zionism; Borochov “proceeded from premises expressed in consciously proletarian, socialist terminology, but he really adds up to the same thing.”<sup>93</sup> In his classic *Our Platform* (1906), Borochov writes that “the Jewish middle and petty bourgeoisie, with no territory and no market of its own, is powerless against” the menace of national competition — this was the age of monopolization and the fall of the petty bourgeoisie to the ranks of the proletariat. “Lacking any means of support in their struggle for a market, they tend to speak of an independent political existence of a Jewish state where they would play a leading political role.”<sup>94</sup>

In other words, just as the Jewish upper bourgeoisie needed a foreign market (e.g., for the export of capital), the Jewish middle bourgeoisie needed a domestic market. They would have their own national territory, cheap raw materials, vast resources of labour (the Eastern Jews), and profitable investments. In this situation the petty bourgeois could perhaps be kept from having to join the working class, but it is not hard to recognize that in this specific area the middle bourgeoisie would be the chief beneficiary. Finally, Jewish labour would be able to escape the competition of non-Jewish workers, who were willing to work for lower wages, and to form a workers’ aristocracy in Palestine, where they would suppress competition from Arab labour. Following the example used in the imperialist countries, the Jewish bourgeoisie would be perfectly willing to grant Jewish workers privileges so as to make

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<sup>90</sup> Lobel, p. 111.

<sup>91</sup> Rocker, p. 163. This is confirmed by the Zionist who introduces Rocker’s book, p. 29.

<sup>92</sup> Thus Stein, p. 69.

<sup>93</sup> Hertzberg, p. 50.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 361-3.

them loyal. Zionism operated on a class alliance whereby each Jewish class would have the right to exploit the one beneath it; as it turned out in practice, only the Arab workers would be at the bottom. It was thus possible for the backbone of Zionist colonization to proceed from the efforts of Jewish workers.

The practitioners of Labour Zionism have certainly assisted in the establishment of this framework. The first thing done by Ben Gurion, a Labour Zionist par excellence, when he went to Palestine in 1906, was to organize an armed force to protect Jewish colonies. In 1922 he formed the Histadruth, a racist trade union organization (Arabs were excluded) which was modelled on Herzl's plans. It was due to policies such as this that Karl Kautsky could write of Zionist colonization as early as 1921: "Little more attention was paid to the Arabs than was paid to the Indians in North America."<sup>95</sup>

One function Labour Zionism played was to co-opt Jewish workers from revolutionary politics and to guide them in the interests of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie, which, in spite of Borochof's denials, was one of the major classes the ideology of Zionism served. It was no accident that Zionist colonization really was initiated by Jewish big finance capitalists. In 1882 Rabbi Samuel Mohilever converted Baron Edmond de Rothschild to the idea that poor Jews should be settled in Palestine; "Rothschild remained, until his death in 1934, the greatest single benefactor of the Zionist work there."<sup>96</sup> The financial magnates had both general class aims (prevent revolution, reduce anti-Semitism so they could be inconspicuous members of the European ruling classes, etc.) as well as particular financial goals in calling for and supporting the emigration or deportation of Jewish workers from the East and even the West. In both Europe and Russia the Rothschilds had vast investments; consequently they stood to lose by popular revolution in either area. Furthermore, the Jewish masses interfered with their investment activities, especially in the financial market of Russia, where the czarist state used the Russian Jews to pressure the Jewish bankers. This was particularly a problem from 1891, when huge profitable loans were being made by the Rothschilds to Russia at a time when they could less than ever afford interference arising from the Eastern Jews.<sup>97</sup> It is not surprising that in the same year the Jewish Colonization Society (ICA) was formed by the financier Baron de Hirsch; it gave a huge endowment to settle Eastern Jews in safe, faraway lands like Argentina, which supplemented the settling Rothschild had already been carrying out in Palestine. They were perfectly willing to deal with their class allies represented by the

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<sup>95</sup> Kautsky, *Are the Jews a Race?* (NY: International Publishers, 1926), p. 209.

<sup>96</sup> Hertzberg, p. 401; see also p. 403.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Count Egon Caesar Corti, *The Reign of the House of Rothschild* (NY: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1928), II, pp. 412-3; Lobel, pp. 106-10.

czarist state in order to enhance their already legendary wealth; they had no qualms about sacrificing the interests of the Jewish masses for profit. Warshawsky, the noted Russian Jewish capitalist, pretended that the czar was really tolerant and that all the trouble stemmed from the “ignorance of the Jewish masses”; de Hirsch offered fifty million francs to “educate” these Jews, “provided the schools would be under the administration of the Russian government.”<sup>98</sup>

Colonization would not only solve the Jewish problem but also would make a profitable venture for the Jewish financial magnates. Rothschild “wished to amalgamate the emigration of East European Jews with the colonial interests of French imperialism,” and “used his financial power in the Ottoman treasury in order to prepare a new sphere of influence for French interests, employing Jewish immigrants as settlers.”<sup>99</sup> He was accused of “playing a political game for France,” and his own colonists, who often revolted against his autocratic administration which dictated what crops to grow (all of which Rothschild bought), charged him with “seeking to enslave the colonists and to extort profits for himself.”<sup>100</sup> He invested millions of francs in the colonies, which he regarded as his personal possessions; that he turned over management of his huge settlements to the ICA in 1899 and to the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association after World War I changed nothing, for he continued to dictate to the Jewish settlers behind the scenes.<sup>101</sup>

It is clear that Zionism suited the needs of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie, and it was natural that Herzl should appeal first to de Hirsch and Rothschild to help him found a Jewish state. True, they initially rejected some of Herzl’s considerations on the formation of this state. Nevertheless one finds in Rothschild’s colonization schemes the rudiments of the exclusive racist state which later became Israel. He drove the fellahin off their land, and became indignant when he suspected that one of his colonies hired Arab labour.<sup>102</sup> “He even made sure that the colonies he bought clustered strategically across Judea, Samaria and Galilea, to serve as strongholds in time of need. The time of need came, four decades later. ...The Arab armies can deem themselves lucky that there weren’t more such non-Zionists as he.”<sup>103</sup> While initially he was reluctant to support the idea of a Jewish state, later Rothschild declared “that he was converted to political Zionism and that he regrets his failure to agree to

<sup>98</sup> David Druck, *Baron Edmond Rothschild* (NY: Hebrew Monotype Press, 1829), p. 112.

<sup>99</sup> Israeli Socialist Organization, “The Other Israel” (1966) in John Gerassi (ed.), *The Coming of the New International* (NY: World Pub., Co., 1971), pp. 218-9.

<sup>100</sup> Druck, pp. 20 and 178-9; Litvinoff, *To the House of their Fathers* (NY: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), p. 120.

<sup>101</sup> Druck, pp. 185-6; Levensohn, pp. 23-6.

<sup>102</sup> Israeli Socialist Organization, p. 219.

<sup>103</sup> Frederic Morton, *The Rothschilds* (NY: Atheneum, 1962), p. 207.

Herzl's plans."<sup>104</sup> But why did Baron Edmond and many other members of the Jewish bourgeoisie fail to support political Zionism fully prior to World War I, especially if Zionism was the ideology in best accord with their interests?

The main reason was simply that they originally had unfounded doubts about how much Zionism was really in their interests. They had to be convinced that Zionism did not mean to displace the Jewish upper bourgeoisie to an underdeveloped country where they would lose their places as top members of the European ruling classes and the opportunities for mammoth investments this position yielded. To dispel this illusion, Zionist advocates emphasized again and again that their "final solution" was mainly for the Eastern masses and that the Jewish bourgeoisie would not be pressured to emigrate to Palestine.<sup>105</sup> Another reason was that these rentiers and coupon clippers were afraid to take risks that entailed leaps in the dark (reflected in the Rothschilds' emphasis on investing in safe government securities), as the *immediate* formation of a Jewish state entailed. But by World War I this had changed. The World Zionist Organization, led by the Jewish bourgeoisie, had not only endured two decades of survival but had become powerful. Externally, the world's major imperialist power had promised its full support to Zionism, leaving the Jewish upper bourgeoisie with no doubts at all. Consequently the House of Rothschild led the way in clamouring for the full Zionist programme, exerting all the pressure that the world's most powerful clique of finance capitalists could muster.<sup>106</sup> Zionism was recognized by the Rothschilds as their own ideology. "Without me, Zionism wouldn't have succeeded," said Baron Edmond Rothschild, "but without Zionism my work would have been struck to death."<sup>107</sup>

That Zionism expressed the interests of Jewish finance capital headed by the Rothschilds did not negate the fact that Zionism also was an ideology of world imperialism. Besides the Jewish big finance capitalists and the Jewish upper and middle bourgeoisie representing industrial capital who would operate in their particular market, the Jewish and non-Jewish bourgeoisie involved in industry and in merchandise in the old country would also gain by colonization of Palestine, via new markets, raw material sources, etc. Zionist colonialism has therefore always been tied most strongly to world imperialism, which was led by Britain until World War II. From the beginning the Jewish settlements were bound economically to Britain, growing oranges and barley for the British market and importing cotton and iron goods from Britain.

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<sup>104</sup> Druck, p. 154.

<sup>105</sup> E.g., Hertzberg, p. 85.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Stein, pp. 182-6 and 402.

<sup>107</sup> Morton, p. 205.

All the great imperialist powers favoured Zionism, but that British imperialism was finally chosen as the foremost ally of Zionism was due in part to the role played by Chaim Weizmann, the strong man of the world Zionist movement for decades. As early as the age of twelve Weizmann believed that British imperialism would create the Zionist state.<sup>108</sup> The manner in which he clashed as a student in 1898 with Lenin, Plekhanov, and “the arrogant Trotsky”<sup>109</sup> was a prelude to his lifelong battle against revolution to preserve the power of the Jewish and non-Jewish bourgeoisie. His best friends were top British officers and politicians and rich Jews.<sup>110</sup> A chemist, he penetrated this elite by agreeing with Churchill to make 30,000 tons of acetone for explosives in the first war of competing imperialisms, a job he repeated for the US as well as Britain in the second such war.<sup>111</sup> He referred to “the British whose Empire is built on moral principles” and took as his colonizing model the French in Tunisia.<sup>112</sup> During World War I, Weizmann, Justice Brandeis (who later convinced President Wilson that Zionism was in the interests of US imperialism), and others formed a British-Palestine committee “under whose auspices a weekly journal, *Palestine*, was published in order to make clear what advantages would accrue to Great Britain’s imperial interests from support of Zionist aims.”<sup>113</sup> A frequent contributor to the journal was the military expert for the *Guardian*, Herbert Sidebotham, who argued in these terms:

The only possible colonists of Palestine are the Jews. Only they can build up in the Mediterranean a new domination associated with this country from the outset in Imperial work, at once a protection against the alien East and a mediator between it and us, a civilization distinct from ours yet imbued with our political ideas... [We believe:] That the buffer-state in Southern Syria might be expected to work with equal effectiveness as in India, and with greater smoothness. That a buffer-state in Syria would remove many of the stock objections to an extension of our military liabilities and that if this buffer-state became a dominion or genuine colony it would be a source of great strength to us in the Eastern Mediterranean, both politically and ultimately militarily; and finally that the only possible colonizers on a great and worthy scale in Palestine are the Jews.<sup>114</sup>

The other imperialist powers also recognized that Zionism would be in their interests. Kurt Blumenfeld, a high Zionist leader in the Berlin Central

<sup>108</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *Chaim Weizmann* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958), pp. 41-2.

<sup>109</sup> *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949), pp. 50-1.

<sup>110</sup> E.g., Berlin, pp. 19 and 51-3.

<sup>111</sup> Litvinoff, p. 120; Stein, pp. 117-8.

<sup>112</sup> Hertzberg, p. 585; *Trial and Error*, pp. 191 and 244.

<sup>113</sup> Levensohn, p. 63.

<sup>114</sup> Sidebotham, *England and Palestine* (London: Constable and Co., 1918), p. 186. See also Stein, pp. 135 and 563.

Office, argued in 1915 in these terms: "The Jews... were the natural intermediaries between Germany and the East, and the Jews who settled in Palestine would thus form a bastion of German influence in that part of the world. Given their chance, they could be relied upon to spread German culture, and promote German economic penetration, throughout the Turkish Empire." German propaganda began advocating Zionism.<sup>115</sup> Karl Ballod in his *Palästina* raised Zionist hopes by showing "the advantages offered by Zionism to the Central Powers."<sup>116</sup> Even after the British made the Balfour Declaration, both German and Austrian foreign offices continued to woo Zionism.<sup>117</sup> The French government too sympathized with Zionism, and proposed to found a Jewish state in al-Hasa in Arabia in spite of its promise of Arab liberation.<sup>118</sup>

To rally the Arabs to their side so as to obtain the economic and other strategic advantages they wanted, British imperialism, by correspondence such as the Hussein-McMahon agreements, and through agitators like "Lawrence of Arabia," promised the Arabs national independence.<sup>119</sup> The British were soon renegeing on their previous agreement with the Arabs through the secret Sykes-Picot agreement wherein France and Britain decided to partition and rule some of the same areas they had promised liberation to, including Palestine. The Bolsheviks published this along with the other secret treaties they found in the czar's vaults, thereby exposing the imperialist plans. But the deceptive reassurances of the British lulled the Arabs, who helped them to defeat the Turks.

The Balfour Declaration revealed the true plans of British imperialism in Palestine: the creation of a Zionist state. As the text says, it is a "declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations," which can only indicate that the imperialists and the Zionists had the same interests. The first phrase in the text bears this out, in spite of the fact that "homeland" was substituted for "state" in the final draft to deceive the Arabs. The second phrase, promising the continued existence of "the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine," did not appear in Balfour's original draft of August 1917, indicating that it was added to lend a flavour of respectability of no more real value than the earlier promises of Arab national liberation; conspicuous for its lack of mention of any national rights of the Arabs, the phrase had to be

<sup>115</sup> Stein, pp. 211-3 and 216.

<sup>116</sup> Kautsky, pp. 195 and 210.

<sup>117</sup> Litvinoff, p. 136; Levensohn, p. 65.

<sup>118</sup> See Montagu's secret memorandum, British Record Office, Cab. No. 24/28, reprinted in *Edwin Montagu and the Balfour Declaration* (NY: Arab League, n.d.), p. 17.

<sup>119</sup> Lawrence later wrote: "I was rousing the Arabs on false pretences.... I exploited their highest ideals and made their love of freedom one more tool to make England win." Cf. R. Palme Dutt, "Whither the Middle East?" *Labour Monthly*, July 1967, pp. 289 and 292-3.



added to quieten the Arabs, who constituted 91% of the population, as much as possible. The third phrase, which promised the continued existence of "the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country," was a reassurance to the Jewish middle class who had feared that the existence of Zionism would pressure them to leave the countries where they presently held privileged positions. Nor was this fact the only indicator of the bourgeois nature of Zionism: perhaps even more significant was that the Declaration was addressed to Lord Lionel Rothschild, who was then the high priest of big Jewish finance capital (the English Rothschilds by now were the most important of all branches of the House of Rothschild).<sup>120</sup> Condemning this veiled attempt to annex Palestine, a Jewish worker at the British Socialist Party conference at Easter, 1918 exclaimed: "The conversion of Palestine into a Jewish State would mean that the Jews would be used as a tool by the capitalists all over the world."<sup>121</sup>

One motive of the advocates of Zionism was to prevent revolution, and this reappears in the case of the Balfour Declaration, which was issued between the February and October Revolutions. As one old Zionist explains it:

Considering how Czarist Russia [which had been friendly to Zionism, especially from 1915] had treated its Jews, it is a little surprising that it should have struck Balfour as an 'extraordinary phenomenon' that many Jews were active, and some were conspicuous, in the revolutionary movements. But Balfour's remark that 'these are the reasons which make you and me such ardent Zionists,' is significant. The events of 1917 made it natural to turn to Zionism as a stabilizing force in the Jewish world, and to value it for its power, if given its chance, to provide an antidote to the destructive mania of Jews in rebellion against their lot by offering them a healthy outlet for their frustrated energies. This was part of the case for Zionism as presented at the Peace Conference by Weizmann, who in February 1919 told the Council of Ten that 'the solution proposed by the Zionist Organization was the only one which would in the long run bring peace and at the same time transform Jewish energy into a constructive force instead of its being dissipated in destructive tendencies or bitterness.'<sup>122</sup>

This rhetoric about revolution being destructive was somewhat ironical coming from a man who was crucial in making thousands of tons of explosives which were used in World War I. In fact, one reason the Zionists hated the Bolsheviks so much was because the latter favoured withdrawal from the imperialist war, peace without annexations, and national self-determination, which would make it impossible for the Zionists to take Palestine from the Arabs.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Corti, p. 414.

<sup>121</sup> Andrew Rothstein, "Wars and Principles," *Labour Monthly*, Aug. 1967, p. 342.

<sup>122</sup> Stein, pp. 161-2.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

By the time of the Balfour Declaration, all the essentials of Zionist ideology had been formed, including its strategy and even many tactical guidelines. With the war at an end, all that remained for the British imperialists and their Zionist allies to do was to carry out their plans. The League of Nations granted in the Mandate the right of unlimited economic exploitation to the British and the Zionist Organization. The massive inflow of Jewish private capital began, and it was profitably invested.<sup>124</sup> The Zionist Socialists drove the Arabs from the labour market.<sup>125</sup> No class alliance could be forged between the Arab workers and peasants and the Zionist workers for the same reason that the original white settlers of North America refused to ally with the native Americans. Each time the Arab masses rose in protest or in rebellion, in 1920-1, 1929, 1933, and 1935-9, the privileged Jewish working class sided with the imperialists. The history of Zionism in the Arab world had already been predetermined, although the Zionist leadership of the British Mandate period had to wait until 1948 before Herzl's vision could be fulfilled.

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<sup>124</sup> E.g., Hans Kohn, *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1932), p. 152.

<sup>125</sup> The Zionists nevertheless used Arabs to carry out tasks such as draining swamps which presented health risks for Jews. See Jessie Sampter (ed.), *Modern Palestine* (NY: Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, 1933), p. 109.